

**UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS LOWELL
CENTER FOR LOWELL HISTORY
ORAL HISTORY COLLECTION**

**THE WORKING PEOPLE OF LOWELL
LOWELL NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK
MARY BLEWETT/MARTHA MAYO**

SOUTHEAST ASIAN PROJECT

INFORMANT: SANITH SOK [CAMBODIA]

INTERVIEWER: PAUL PAGE

DATE: 1986

P = PAUL

S = SANITH

Tape 86.23

P: My name is Paul Page, and I'm with Sanith Sok. We'll be talking about your past and your present life here in Lowell. So, could you tell me something about where you are from, what country?

S: I came from originally Phnom Penh, Cambodia.

P: What city?

S: Phnom Penh

P: Oh, yeah. What kind of life were YOU living there in Phnom Penh? What were your parents doing?

S: My parents, my father was a high school back before 1975. My mother, she was just a housewife. I had four brothers, and three sisters. My father is now retired. My parents are staying on the farm.

P: Did you go through high school in Phnom Penh"?

S: Yes.

P: But not college?

S: yes. Actually, the high school in Cambodia, we went 13 years to complete high school. Most of the high school students Could speak French as a second language.

P: Did you learn English there?

S: No, I did not learn English there.

P: How old were you when Pol Pot came to power?

S: I was twelve years old when Pol Pot came to power.

P: What did you do after that?

S: My family was brought out of the city and stayed on the farm. My father was working on the farm, and my mother too, and all my brothers and sisters were split Out among different groups. I was on a 12 -13 year old group, and my other brother was in a teenager group.

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P: So your family wasn't together

S: No

P: How many years were you out working on the farm?

S: About 3 years, from 1975-1979, almost 4 years.

P: What were you thinking about while you were out there on the farm*^

S: I was thinking about that we would never go back to the old time. And I thought that we would be like that all of Our lives -- working on the farm, not seeing each other, not staying with each other. Once a month, they would let us go back to see each other -- a family reunion -- but we can't stay with each other. My father and mother stayed in the town, and worked on the farm. But my brother was split Out on a teenage farm, and my older brother and sister were split out on different groups of ages, and I was in one group of young people 12-13 years old.

P: You [.-:now though that eventually you were given the chance to leave the farms there. You never left?]

S: No, I never left the farm.

P: Well, what happened when the Vietnamese came in?

S: When the Vietnamese came in, I was away from my parents. I was in another farm. WE had a small group of young people living Out in the rice fields. When the Vietnamese came in, we split up from each other and ran to the towns trying to find Our families. I found my parents right after the Vietnamese came, but my other brothers and sisters came about a week after the Vietnamese came because they got split out from their groups -- a long way from the towns. It took them a while to get back from the town.

P: What was Pol Pot doing to the Cambodians?

S: They had us work on the farms, not giving us enough food to eat, killing people by giving not enough food to eat; killing by shooting; and knocking down with a stick.

P: Why were they doing this?

S: I don't know why (laughing) they did those. They kill people who have an education. Who were soldiers with the United States. They thought those people were against them, with their enemy. That's how a lot of people got by, by doing a lot of lying. Telling them that they weren't a

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soldier, telling them that they were a taxi driver, a farmer, or just a student. They didn't tell them that they worked in offices or they had an education, a doctor, engineering. If they told the Pal Pot Communists, they would get killed because the Pal Pat Communists did not like those people.

P: So when the Vietnamese, Did they free the Cambodian people?

S: Yes, they did.

P: You moved back to Phnom Penh-

S: Yes, they also let us go back to Our own town, people travelled from one place to another, and we could have our own place, our own farm; we could do what we want when they first came. It was more like freedom.

P: What did you do when you went back to the city?

S: When I went back to the city, about two or three months, they opened schools, and I also worked in a bicycle factory with my brothers and sisters. My parents still lived in the town. Just my sisters and brothers came into the city to work. To work where we used to live before 1975.

P: How long did you stay in Phnom Penh?

S: I stayed about a year and a half.

P: Why did you leave?

S: I left Cambodia because, when the Vietnamese first came to Cambodia, they were easy on us -- they let us free, they were cool and let us do what we want. Then, after a while, they started being strict: so hard on us. They let us work hard and they cut us right in place. I thought: "They are Communists, and they might do the same as the Pal Pot Communists." That's why I decided to leave Cambodia. When I left Cambodia, I didn't think to come to the United States. I just thought to leave Cambodia to come to the border where you stay at a camp to start a colony to fight the revolution and have the Vietnamese leave Our country.

P: So were there other people in Phnom Penh who were thinking about overthrowing the Vietnamese?

S: Yes, there were a lot of people thinking about overthrowing the Vietnamese.

P: How did you get out of Phnom Penh? How?

S: When I left Phnom Penh, my parents knew that I was going

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to leave, and they were going to report to the Vietnamese government that I was leaving Cambodia. My parents did not want me to leave that's why they reported to them. Then, I told them that I was going to leave, but a week later I left without telling them. I came with a whole bunch of teenagers an a train, it took about two days to get to Battambang, the other city near Thailand. And we walked from that place to the border camp.

P: You went by truck to Battambang?

S: Yeah, Battambang, the other city. (Didn't understand the question, but he went by train).

P: You went there with the idea of fighting against the Vietnamese?

S: Yes, that was my first idea when I went to the camp. I was going to stay on the Border camp, and join the army on the border.

P: SO, YOU were saying that you had never heard of the United States in Cambodia.

S: I had heard of the United States, but I never knew where it was. I never had a Picture of where the United States was, and how it looked and everything. Even when I had not been here before, I never saw a magazine about the United States or I never an article about the United States.

P: Did you ever think about leaving Cambodia for another country?

S: I wasn't thinking about leaving Cambodia to another country until I came to the border camp. When I had heard about my brother who came to Khao I Dang camp in 1979. When I came to the border camp, I met my brother's friend who told me that my brother is in Khao I Dang camp, and that they have the opportunity to leave the country for the United States and other countries. Also, I came to Khao I Dang camp because I wanted to be with my brother. When I came to Khao I Dang camp, my brother told me that he put in an application with the US Ambassador to come to the United States. After a month that I stayed with him, he was called up to come to this Country.

P: Were you excited, or what kind of emotions and feelings did you have when you were leaving Cambodia for Khao I Dang?

S: I was kind of scared. I wasn't excited until I saw my brother in Khao I Dang. From Phnom Penh to Khao I Dang I was always scared, I was afraid that I might be killed without my

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family knowing where I was. If I got killed somewhere along the way to Khao I Dang, they would not know where I was. That is why I was so scared, until the last minute that I saw my brother in Khao I Dang camp.

P: So this is in 1979 or '80~'

S: The end of 1980, January 1981. I left Phnom Penh in Dec. 1980. When I came to the border camp, I stayed there for two months on the border, then I left from the border camp to Khao I Dang camp in February.

P: How long did you stay in the camp there?'

S: I stayed in the refugee camp altogether till September when I came to the United States -- about 9 months.

P: What were the conditions like in the camp?

S: In the camp, it was very dirty. We live on the ground in a small tent. You didn't have enough water in the summer time. We had enough food support by the Red Cross and the United Nations. But all we ate was canned food, like fish in a can (laughs). The condition was not very good. But compared to the Pol Pot Communists, conditions were good. We didn't have enough good food to eat, but at least we had enough food everyday supplied by the United Nations. We had a problem with water. We had to buy water to drink and use.

P: What were you doing all these months in the camps`7 Just sitting around~

S: Just sitting around, do nothing. I did not know what to do, or where to go. I was afraid to go into a Thai town to buy some materials or stuff to sell to make some money. I was afraid to do that. It was very dangerous to get around. If the Thais see us they might kill US. But when I came to Khao I Dang camp, life in Khao I Dang was a little bit better than the border camp. We got more food and water there than at the border camp. We seemed to have more water.

P: How did the Thai army or government treat people?

S: They don't treat people very good in the border camps or Khao I Dang. They keep us in the camps, not going Out the gate. If they see us doing that, they can shoot us if they want. They seem like they have power and control over us, and they can do whatever they want with us if they feel ...

P: Afterwards, did you go to Indonesia or the Philippines?

S: I didn't stay in all those islands. I just left from

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Thailand, and Bangkok to the United States. My sister-in-law was pregnant again, and they helped her until she had a baby. We had to stay a couple months extra. So instead of going to the Philippines, we stayed in Thailand. Then we went from Bangkok to New York.

P: By plane?

S: Yes, by plane.

P: What brought you to New York though, why not California~l

S: I don't know. I think our sponsor from Manchester, Conn. Our plane flew from Bangkok to Rome, Italy; from flenmar~.--. to New York. We seem to come another way around instead of from California.

P: Who pays for the plane fare?

6: These are sponsored by the AFCO, and the other two or three churches sponsored our family through the town of Manchester.

P: Who was the sponsor?

S: Two or three American sponsors in Manchester.

P: But you said the ARC7'

S: AFCO was the agency sponsor. Then they have two different churches in the town who sponsor the families doing transportation, finding houses, and taking care of medical support and other things.

P: What does AFCO stand for?

S: American..

P: Federation ...

S: American Refugee , I forgot, but Kathi Flynn Would know.

P: You are here in Connecticut now, and what happened to your religion? I imagine you are a Buddhist. Were there temples there in Connecticut?

S: No there were none in Connecticut. When our family came to Manchester, there were only three or four Cambodians in that town, and they had a hard time getting around to find other Cambodians in town to help us. We all came to that town at the same time and every one of us new in the Country. It was very hard for us the first time. But, we got support

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from the churches in Manchester, and they helped us a lot. My brother and sister-in-law they went to the ESL school. I went to Manchester high school, and all my nephews went to the kindergarten school.

P: What were your first impressions when you landed in New York?

S: Lost and afraid. It seems that when I first landed in New York, to look around at the American people around us, we seemed like people from another planet, from another world. The way we looked was different from the European people, from the American people. We seemed like the only family in the airport that was different. Feel strange the first time. Actually, we were so tired, that when our sponsor came to pick us up from Bradley's Airport in Connecticut. We were sleeping in the car. Each stop at the airports we had the American workers for the agency was there and showed us the directions and lead to where we were supposed to go. When we got to the **airport** in Connecticut, they had a Cambodian family who came here in 1975 who came to pick us up with our sponsor, they did some translation: tell us what is going to happen and where we're going to stay.

P: So, you had no idea what America was like before you came here, no preparation..

S: Not at all.

P: No cultural orientation ...

S: No. Everything I learned start right at the beginning when I went to school in Connecticut.

P: What are some of the strange things that you saw when you first came here? You know, here they mention snow and stuff like that ... What kind of things happened to you that you never expected?

S: Cars, alot of cars, and a lot of things that I did not expect to happen in this country, but I just don't remember.

P: What about the food, though?

S: Yeah, the food is one of other things, that foods were completely different for US. Our sponsor took us to the Oriental foods in Hartford, Conn. once a week to buy some Oriental food. When we first came to the United States, we could not eat the American food at all. So they had to bring US.

P: What was wrong with the American type food?

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S: (Laughing), We need rice, and cooked the way we cook at home in Cambodia or in the camps. The American food is different. You use a lot of meat, cooked a different way, and eating potatoes instead of rice. We can't eat anything without rice, we have to rice and vegetables to go with it.; and cooked in an Oriental way.

P: Now, when you were in Connecticut did you end up changing religions?

S: When I lived with the American family, when I knew a lot of English, went to school and learned alot about the American culture, then, I was living with them and I went to church with them. I was changing and going out with American friends, I seemed to catch up with a new religion fast.

P: What was it like for you to switch religion like that?

S: It was very hard in the first place. It is just having a lot of friends who are American, and they take me out with them and to do things with them; and they taught me a new way of life and to do things the American way: such as catching with them fast. I didn't even think it was strange to do things in the American way or to change religion. In the town that I lived there was not many Cambodians, and we didn't have any temple

or somebody to teach us religion. I lived with an American family, learned how to cook American food.

P: How about TV sets, radios; that Must have been different.

S: That was different -- every channel was English speaking. I did a lot of watching television when I came to this country. I thought that watching public television, where English is being taught..

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S: Our family didn't have any TV set in Cambodia, but that does not mean that I never saw it or knew it. I saw some other people, like our friends in the next house, they had a TV set. I didn't know how it worked, but when I came to this country, our sponsor bought us a TV set and showed us how to plug it in and turn it on, and stuff. But I saw it before, and it is not that when I saw a TV set I didn't know what it is; it is just that I never had one.

P: Can you remember anything that you never saw before until you came here?

S: No, I don't remember anything that I never saw before till I came here.

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S: Well the grocery stores different from us. WE had open markets -- all the markets are outdoors in Southeast Asia and you are shopping with a crowd and you hear a lot of noise. In this country, you go to a grocery store, it is quiet and you just pick up things. In our country, we do like asking the price to down, the buyer asking the seller for the price to drop down. In this country, whatever the price marked on the merchandise -- it's gonna be that much. And I didn't know the first time when I bought a pack of cookies, and it was like \$2; I thought it was just two dollars, I didn't know they took out tax. and stuff. That was very new to me. We didn't have any tax in my country.

P: How long did you stay in Connecticut?

S: About three years, almost 4 years.

P: Until 1984?

S: February 1985

P: I don't know if you know the answer to this question, but did you feel that people discriminated against you, or talked about you.

S: Yeah, I had some feeling when I was in high school, when I walked or go out with whole group of American students; they might talk about me, they might see that we are different people. One thing that I don't speak the language very good. I had a lot of feeling that they probably discriminate against us the first time. But some people very rudish, they talk in front of me, and look at us strange. Some people in class would talk about what kind of people are you: "Why did you come to this country?" " Why didn't You Stay in your own country?" Also some nice people who help us with the language, help us to teach us the Culture and the new way of life in this country.

P: What brought you to Lowell?

S: I had a friend in Lowell, and he moved from Connecticut to Lowell also. He was telling me.- "Lowell is a very nice area to live, a lot of jobs, you can get a good job in Lowell." Also he said there are more Cambodians in Lowell. Like I came to Lowell a couple of times before I moved here. I found Out that I liked this area, that's why I decided to move.

P: When you first moved to this country, what kind of health problems were you having?

S: I didn't have any -- just colds.

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P: You never had colds before?

6: I had them, but not as much as this country the first time. Seems that all winter time I had colds for a couple of years. In Cambodia, I had colds but not as much as in this country. I get use to the cold and stuff in 1984 to now. In the wintertime I don't have much problems.

P: The Cambodians are trying or having problems with the temple here in Chelmsford. Could you talk a little about what the problem is?

S: I didn't know much about the temple, but I knew some. The problem was, when we bought the temple in Chelmsford , and thing in our country didn't know about the law in this country -- you have to get approval from all the government, the neighbors , the city. In our country, people buy things or property , they can do whatever they want with it. They don't have to get acceptance from the town, or neighbors. We thought that we just buy the building and we move in our own way without telling the neighbors. That building was built for the factories, and we wanted to use the building as a temple -- having the monk staying at the temple overnight. That's why when we first moved into the temple there was that problem. The neighbors burnt our flags, and gave us troubles. That was our mistake, because we didn't get talk to the neighbors or ask the American people or somebody who knew about law in this country. Now, everything is straight

away. We got our temple back. And this past Sunday was the celebration to open up a new temple. We raised money to buy a fence to put around the temple. So that Young children won't try to go across the properties, or pick something on these properties. We had an open house at the temple, and invited the neighbors, townsmen.

P: Did they come?

S: Yes, I think they came.

P: You got married recently. Did you get married in Buddhist temple?

S: Yes a Buddhist temple and the Cambodian culture.

P: What makes a Cambodian wedding different from an American or Christian wedding? Is there a difference?

S: Yes, there is a lot of differences. American wedding, Christian, the bride wears a white gown and goes to church. Us, we do the ceremony at home, invite the monks to our house, do the blessing, and do the ceremony at home, and then

we go to a restaurant to have the reception. We dress in our own costume at Our homes. And the bride Must be dressed in the Cambodian costume at the reception too.

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P: Did you bring these costumes from Cambodia?

S: No, we rented from some people who had the costume.

P: You rented from some other Cambodian people?

S: They must have brought them from Cambodia.

P: Did you bring anything with you from Cambodia?

S: No. I didn't bring anything from Cambodia. I wasn't thinking about stuff. But my brother brought some things because he's older -- things he had made, or things of my parents and grandparents.

P: Have you been keeping in touch with your parents?

S: Yes writing letters

P: Sending money?

S: I never send money because we could never send money to Cambodia. I send small packages and letters

P: What would be in the package?

S: A watch, camara, medicines, some clothings, a little material; stuff that is very little and that they don't have in Cambodia.

P: Here in Lowell, where do You live?

S: Right now, I live with a brother-in-law, I live with my wife's. We thought about getting our own apartment. But the apartment did not turn out right, and we had to wait a long time. My wife decided to live with my sister-in-law and we hope to share rent.

P: What happened to the apartment you were going to get?

S: They had to do a lot of work in that apartment, and we were ready to move in since June 1st, and they kept until the 16th of June. When we got back from vacation, we still did not have the apartment. We had to wait a long time, and we decide to take it. We are now looking for another apartment to move in. Doesn't seem to be a very good landlord in that apartment, that's why we decided not to take. He seems careless about

the apartments. If something goes wrong ...

P: Among Cambodians, what are the greatest problems you find?

S: Right now we find problem of a husband and wife fighting, getting a divorce. Cambodian families usually share the apartments with one family or another, and they get into fights about who is to take care of the house work. Usually the women have a lot of trouble fighting each other over taking care of the house and each other.

P: In Cambodia, you would have lived with a big family too--

S: Yes, but it would have been with our own families -- not with somebody else. With our brothers, and sisters, parents; right in our own family -- we don't usually live with other people. But in Cambodia, we have more land, more property, more house. Usually when somebody gets married, they go out and the parents would build a house for them.

P: Not here

S: We don't seem to have problems with out living arrangements. But here it costs too much to live on our own, and people have to share apartments with another family; and they start having problems with one another. That's what, since I worked at the International Institute, all of the problems I found since working here.

P: How about problems with landlords?

S: That's another problem too. We have some landlords who did not take good care of Cambodian families. A lot of things go wrong, especially in the winter time. The heat would not work, and the pipes broke because of this. We had a hard time contacting landlords to take care of that family. We had a family this past winter, their house had no heat for a Couple of days. She had to move out her kids to live with her neighbor until the landlord came up to fix up the heat.

P: The CMAA, what kind of help or assistance does it give to the Cambodians? What do you depend on them for?

S: A lot of Cambodians depend on the CMAA as a social service, they help the Cambodian to find a job, to find training school, teach ESL, and a lot of social work. They come to us with welfare problems, other problems they go to the CMAA -- if they need day care, they need training they will go to the CMAA.

P: Are the people who work for the CMAA volunteers?

S: No they get paid by the ... I don't know. The CMAA get the funds from the government, and they get those money paid to the Cambodians job developer, ESL teacher, housing person get paid by the Cambodian Mutual Assistance Association.

P: What do the Cambodians hope for here in Lowell? What kind of life do they want?

S: I don't know.

P: Well, let's say ten years from now what do you hope to be doing?

S: To me, if my family, now that I got married; in the ten years I hoping to save some money to buy a house; have some kids, be able to support them and send them to school. Teach our kids the Cambodian language and also the English language.

P: I have another difficult Question. How is American culture and Cambodian culture different? In other words, when you meet an American person, there must be different ways of behaving than when you meet Cambodian persons. Here in America, we are taught that when you meet someone you say: "Hello, how are you." It doesn't mean anything, it's Just being nice. How are the Cambodians doing some of these things*?

S: When the Cambodians meet each other, if its somebody we meet everyday, we say hello, but we don't shake hands. But some of our Culture, like the Americans, we pick up from the French when they came to our country -- doing shaking of hands. But our original culture, we bow and we put up the two hands together. That's how we say hello.

P: Are there other things you can think of that are ...

S: We introduce each other and ask how you are doing. But usually in our culture, somebody that you already know, and you see everyday ' ; it's just not ... Even in the American Culture, with someone you have seen earlier in the day, you still say: "Hello, How are you?" But we don't. Our Culture is different. We use that when we see people that we have never met before and we first see each other.

P: How about your relations with older and younger people?

S: We give more respect to the older people when we see them, more respect to the older people than when we talk to the younger.

P: But here in America, the older people are actually treated

worse than ...

S: Yeah, we have to treat the older people more than the younger people. You know, in Cambodia if the young people don't treat the older people like you are Supposed to; the old people will talk that this is not a nice kid, she will talk a lot of bad about you. If I don't treat her as the older people as nice as the youth are supposed to; she will talk to older people that I am not a nice kid.

P: Now that you are in America, is that tradition still continuing?

S: Yes, still, with the older people we give more respect. If we end up with a fight with an older person and my age, they don't blame the older person, they blame on me as the younger people. They are older and they probably forget a lot of things, and don't know as much as the younger people; so any mistake that the older people have done to the younger people they ought to forget and keep it to the side. You shouldn't get mad at them. That's how we treat the older people, we treat them more like Our parents even though they are not our parents.

P: How are the older Cambodians adjusting to America?

S: They found out that it's very hard to adjust to the United States. Everything is very hard for them, especially the language. The younger people learn the language faster than the older, so they can pick up the language and Culture. If we go out with the American people, we can do things the American way. If we are with Cambodian people, we can do things the Cambodian way. But the older people can't adjust the way of American culture. It's very hard for them. My parents didn't want to come to other countries because of the culture and the lifestyle. They thought at their age they did not want to start up a new lifestyle, at their age they don't want to start a new life in another country. They'd rather born there, and die there.

P: Do you hope to go back to Cambodia?

S: I hope to go back to Cambodia very much to visit, but I wouldn't want to live there.

P: You still have a green card?

S: Yes, green card.

P: When do you think you'll become a citizen?

S: In September, I will be able to apply to be a US citizen.

My five years will be up in September. I heard that it takes a year after that to be a US citizen. We have to take a test, and do a lot of other stuff.

P: I was curious about where you went on vacation recently, where did you go for your honeymoon?

S: We went to Bermuda, just a place that we never been before. I was more suited to American customs and ways than my wife. My wife, she is not used to it that much. She's more with the Cambodians than with the American. Sometimes when I talk to her and tell that it is not the American way -this and that - they don't do this way, they do that way; she get mad at me: "Why didn't you marry an American." (laughs) Sometimes she gets mad at me because I am more Americanized. But I live with her, if I want to marry an American wife, I must adjust myself. I must keep myself in Cambodian customs.

P: What are some of the things she is getting mad about?

S: Just some of the things about the way I am acting and doing. Sometimes she gets mad at me because of that.

P: Would you be willing to tell me any examples?

S: (laughing)

P: No*?

S: It's just that a housewife, I usually tell her to keep the house clean. The American wife always keep the house clean. They don't do it this way, they do it this way ... Also, I told her that I like the American food more than the Cambodian (laughing). Sometimes she got mad at me. Sometimes I buy stuff to put in the house and she doesn't like it. A lot of differences, but I can't think about it.

P: Now, where is she from in Cambodia?

S: She was from Battambang.

P: The other city.

S: Yeah

P: How did You meet in this country?

S: I lived with a friend, my friend is a friend of her brother. I went to her house to visit her brother where she lived, and I met her right there. It was more like visiting the house, then we met each other.

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P: How long did you go together before you were married?

S: two or three months.

P: That's not very long.

S: Usually in the Cambodian culture we don't get to see each other, or know each other that long. If we get to know one another in one or two years, that's not in the Cambodian culture. That's going by the American culture.

P: Do you have to leave soon?

S: That's OK take your time.

Second Hour Side A

S: Paul if you talk about in Cambodia, I went to high school here, the culture that the teenager has about a boyfriend and girl friend is different from us. We don't have that kind of stuff. I was embarrassed, and especially the older people embarrassed to see the younger people kissing each other on the street, on the store, on the school.. In our country it is not like that. You hardly ever see people kissing each other. Its not that they don't go out with each other, but if you want to go to a film -- you have to go out with 2 or 3 different people, a group of 2 or 3 Couples. The guys would go out on the guy's side, and the girls would go out on the girl's side. It's just not like the Americans, going out with two. We don't have dating at all. And another thing, when I first came to Connecticut, I had a friend, he was Vietnamese -- the same culture as us -- we would go out together holding hands. The American people saw us and they laughed at us. We didn't know what they were laughing at, and somebody told us. It doesn't matter for us for guys to go out on the streets holding hands, but it matter if a guy and a girl go out down the street holding hands. They laugh at us if you do that in Cambodia. Even a husband and wife holding hands down the street.

P: Why is that?

S: That's just the culture. People don't do that.

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P: How about the idea of, like in America, a lot of people are only concerned about making money. The only reason a lot of people are living is so that they can make money. Do they have the same attitude in Cambodia?

S: Not that. People were trying to make money, but they didn't want to be rich. They wanted a house, a farm, enough

food for the first year. A lot of people in Cambodia if we don't have war, would have their own farm, and land; they don't have a car, TV, or motorized transportation. They have things that are important like enough clothing, food, a place to live. But, it is not as convenient as in the United States with machines, washing machines in the house. But, in Cambodia, we don't have those kind of things. But, we still have a good life to live. We just grew up that way, never having that stuff.

P: How do you think the Cambodian culture will be preserved? Will you bring them up in the Cambodian way?

S: I will bring them up in the Cambodian way. But I am afraid that if they go to American school, they will get to be Americanized. It is very hard, because in this country, the " narents don't spend enough time with the kids like in Cambodia. If our kids go to school, and spend a lot of time in school; still if we don't teach them the American way they will become so. I will teach my kids to keep the Cambodian ways or cultures, but it might not be possible to do so. The parents trying to teach their children the Cambodian ways, but my nephew doesn't speak Cambodian now. He is around 10 years old, he kind of speaks Cambodian but it is hard for him. He just answers his mother in English. Just very hard. The parents don't have enough time to speak to the kids. My sister-in-law and my brother-in-law is working ...

P: I Couldn't help noticing that YOU lost a finger ...

S: When I was working in a bicycle factory in Cambodia in 1980, I had an accident with a machine and lost a finger.

P: They took you to a hospital....'

S: Yeah, they toot.- me to a Vietnamese hospital in the city. The machine did not cut it, it's just that the doctor did not think that it was good -- can't be left like that. He had to cut off the finger, because the vein was left in inside.

P: If You were over maybe ...

S: Yeah, if I was over here. I went a couple of times to see a doctor, and they were trying to get these fingers straight. And the doctor did an x-ray, and he said that the veins were getting old, and it would be hard to get them back. You know how it is. But it is a long time, five or six years ago. I got used to it.

P: Well I guess that is all of the questions for today. Thank you for youl- help.

S: Your welcome

Tape ends